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[The section on religious ceremonial contains considerable references to diet. See cat. 116, pp. 98-115.]

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or in kind. In the course of a long ceremony, two or three times they may get money, twice or thrice some grain or a few brass or bell-metal utensils, and ultimately a set of new clothes. Like the other castes, the barber and the washerman also work independently outside the system of these traditional arrangements.

OTHER CASTES

Before describing the system of family affiliation between the Madiga untouchables and the agriculturists, brief mention should be made of the other castes in the village.

There is only one family of Katike (Hindu butchers) in the village. In point of social status this family ranks equal to the Kapu group. The head of the family slaughters goats and sheep and sells meat to the villagers. The Muslims slaughter their goats and sheep separately or buy their requirement of beef from the market in the city. Shamirpet is largely a Hindu village, and partly out of regard for the sentiments of the majority community, and partly to avoid trouble, the Muslims do not slaughter cows in the village.

The solitary family of the Darzi (tailor) with an old sewing machine is obviously a new addition to the population of the village. Even by modest city standards the abilities of this tailor in his craft must be regarded as rather crude. Yet he has a fairly good business in the village. Except for the well-to-do people, and a few others who maintain regular contact with the city, all others either buy cheap ready-made clothes, or they get their tailoring done by this man in the village, who also attracts considerable custom from nearby villages.

The families of Vaddars (stone-workers) always have sufficient work, either in Shamirpet itself or in some of the neighbouring villages. Those who can afford a house of a superior type have it built of stone. Use of bricks is very rare in this part of the country and thus practically all substantial houses in the village are of stone. The rocky surroundings of the village provide an ample supply, and the Vaddars, adept in the traditional technique of breaking and shaping stone, turn it into a useful building material. Because of their crude technique the work of the Vaddars is very hard indeed and entails considerable physical exertion. Payment for this work is generally on the basis of piece wages. In the busy agricultural season the Vaddars accept other work also on extra wages.

nities, unreasonable harshness in behaviour or rough handling. Payments differ on the basis of the quality and quantity of work they turn out, and also partly on the nature and temperament of the employer. Slow and lazy workers are paid the barest minimum, while the experienced and the efficient earn much more. In the words of a Madiga, 'If we do not work well, who will pay us? If we do very little work and that too badly, we get what we deserve in the end. If we do not work well we cannot afford to be sensitive; we have to be thick-skinned to stand the abuse of our master. But if we work hard and earn our wages by the sweat of our brow, the master has to treat us well.' To quote another informant: 'Some masters are large-hearted. They make us work hard, but they feed us well. Others expect us to work like oxen, but when it comes to feeding us they dole out mere handfuls as if we were little calves. They always grumble and curse, but when it is time for making payment to us they seem to forget that we too must have a morsel to fill our bellies and a yard of cloth to cover our bodies.' In addition to what the Madiga families get by 'begging' at the time of harvesting, during the busy agricultural season they are fed once a day by the master. According to convention, the master should give a new cloth once every year to each individual from the attached Madiga family who has worked in his fields.

Very few Madigas possess any land worth mentioning, and therefore independent cultivation by them is almost negligible. But they have several other additional means of subsistence open to them. They have to dispose of the dead cattle in the village. As they do not refrain from carrion, this constitutes one source of food supply for them. They are also entitled to get one half of the hide of the dead animal; the other half belongs to the owner. From the owner's share of the hide the Madigas have to make for him such leather articles as he may require for agricultural purposes. Several Madiga families cure hides and work in leather; others earn a part of their living by playing drums and pipes at ceremonial occasions.

2. AGRICULTURE

The settled area of Shamirpet, including the two neighbouring hamlets, is spread over an area of 58 acres. Out of this Shamirpet proper occupies 31·4 acres. In the land surrounding the settlement,

196 on the eighth and ninth days, which are the last days of the festival.

Maisamma Festival. Maisamma protects the village boundaries and ensures the fertility of the fields. An elaborate ceremony is performed in her honour whenever the crops are very good and demand an expression of special gratitude. This festival is not an annual feature in the life of the community and is celebrated only every three or five years.

The days for the celebration are fixed by the village elders after mutual consultation and agreement. The details are often finalized by the village council, which also decides the basis on which subscriptions will be raised from the different families in the village. When there are only a few days left for the festival, preparations for it are taken in hand under the supervision of some enthusiastic youths. For this festival several castes living in the village have to make their special contributions. For example, the Kummaris contribute the earthen pots and officiate as the priest; the Sakalis (washermen) whitewash the Maisamma shrine; the Mangalis (barbers), along with the Sakalis, sacrifice the goats, sheep and fowls; the Wadlas (carpenters) contribute the flag-posts; the Kammaris (blacksmiths) provide the iron fitting to these posts; the Sale (weavers) give cloth for the flags; the Darzi tailors the flag; the Gaondlas (toddy-tappers) provide the fermented palm-juice required for the worship; the Gollas (shepherds) have to contribute the goats and sheep for sacrifice on behalf of the entire village; and finally the Madigas play their musical instruments. The agriculturists provide the funds. Brahmins and Komtis, being vegetarians and averse to animal sacrifice, pay their share of the subscription, but otherwise keep away from the festival. The Muslims contribute towards its expenses and are present at the time of worship.

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The festival lasts three days. On the first day an earthen pot is filled with fermented palm juice, marked with vermilion and turmeric, and carried in a procession to the Maisamma shrine to the accompaniment of Madiga drums and pipes. The Kummari officiating as the priest offers it to the goddess and distributes it later among the people present there. On the second day families of agriculturists, as well as some others, cook rice near the shrine and offer it to Maisamma. The third day is reserved for the final worship and for the making of sacrifices. People go in a procession

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relating to work are different. Among them also, labourers are hired for heavy manual labour, such as carrying loads; but menfolk do not object to ploughing their own fields, nor avoid out-of-door work. Of course, the women mainly look after the management of their household affairs and are never expected to earn for the family's support. 461 565

The conditions on the two lower levels are more or less similar to one another. Unlike the two upper levels, the menfolk from these groups can be compelled to do government work on a nominal payment. They do most of their work with the assistance provided by the members of the family itself. Even when labourers are engaged by the 'average' people, members of the family continue to work side by side with hired men and women. On both these levels women have comparatively greater freedom. They work out of doors, assist the menfolk in their agricultural activities and crafts, and go out for marketing. Women from 'average' families work mostly in their own homes and in family fields, but during the busy agricultural season they can work for wages as well. This is not regarded as derogatory in any sense. In the poor families, on the other hand, women have to work very hard for, besides doing their quota of work in the running of the home and assisting the husband in agriculture and caste occupation, they have to accept occasional work for wages. Among some of the lower castes, women are expected to work and earn for the upkeep of the family. [466]

4. DIET

The standard of living of a family is judged very often from the quality and quantity of its food. In describing the status and standard of a family, people generally say 'they eat well', 'they live somehow, eating the little that they can grow' or 'they live like animals, eating even wild leaves, flowers and roots'. However, the basic diet of the people consists of rice, millets, lentils, meat and fish. The difference in standards of living is judged by the quantity and kind of rice eaten, the frequency of meat intake in the diet and by the use of spices, fats and oils, jaggery and sugar in the food. Green and powdered red chillies are used by all classes of people in considerable quantities. Vegetables are grown in the backyards during the rainy season, and eaten when ready. When 2620

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262 this supply is exhausted, very few vegetables are bought for everyday home consumption. Tender leaves of the tamarind tree are curried and pickled, and are popular with all sections of the community. The poorer people collect wild leafy vegetables; those who are better off buy brinjals, okra and unripe bananas. Tea and coffee are regarded as fashionable, and are regularly used by the rich people as well as those who are educated and who have [273] had some urban contacts. With the exception of the Brahmin and the Komti all castes permit the drinking of fermented palm-juice by men; in most of the lower castes women are also not denied its use. Some Muslims claim never to touch it as its use is not permitted by their religion; others drink it openly. A limited quantity of other liquor imported from the city is also consumed in the village.

Among the Hindus, the Brahmin and the Komti are vegetarians; and the eating of all kinds of meat, fish and eggs is forbidden to them. All the Hindu castes abstain from beef; although the Madiga untouchables are allowed to eat the carrion of cattle which they are expected to dispose of. The Muslims eat beef, but refuse pork. With the exception of the Erkalas and the Madigas, no other Hindu caste eats the domestic pig; wild pigs, of course, are regarded as a delicacy by all meat-eaters except the Muslims.

Milk and *ghee* (clarified butter) are greatly valued, but are difficult to get, and indeed very few people can claim to have them as a part of their everyday diet.

Very little fruit is eaten in the village. When in season, mangoes, guavas and *jamun* (*Eugenia jambolana*) are eaten by the people, more commonly by the children. The only fruit-bearing trees grown by them in their backyards are lime and drum-stick trees. Few people buy any fruit in the markets and shops of the city. Coconuts and bananas are bought for ceremonial occasions, and occasionally large varieties of mangoes too are bought from the shops.

[264] Those who can afford eat three times, others eat only twice daily. According to the seasons there are variations in the type of food and also in the time when the principal meals are eaten. The following menus will illustrate the kind of food eaten by families at different economic levels:

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RICH AND WELL-TO-DO

First Meal

Paratha (thin cakes of unleavened bread made of wheat flour, fried in edible fat).
Meat or vegetable or lentil curry.
Hot pickles.
Tea.

or

Khichri (rice and lentils cooked together with spices).
Meat or vegetable or lentil curry.
Hot pickles.
Tea.

Second Meal

Rice.
Meat or vegetable or lentil or fish curry.
Pickles.

Third Meal

Same as second, with a possible variation in the curry.

AVERAGE FAMILIES

First Meal

Millet gruel.
Chilly powder and salt.
Pickles.

Millet bread.
Curried bringals, leafy vegetables or drum-sticks.
Pickles.

or

Rice gruel.
Chilly powder and salt.

Second Meal

Rice.
Meat or vegetable or lentil or fish curry.
Pickles.

Third Meal

Same as second.

In those families which do not eat three meals regularly, rice left over from the previous evening may be eaten early in the

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262 morning; and a combination of any two menus given above may be adopted for the two principal meals.

POOR FAMILIES

First Meal

Millet gruel.
Chilly powder and salt.

or

Rice left-over from previous evening.
Chilly powder and salt or pickles.

Second Meal

Rice.
Boiled vegetables or lentils (with salt and chillies) or meat curry.

or

Millet bread.
Boiled vegetables or lentils (with salt and chillies) or meat curry.

or

Rice.
Chilly powder and salt.
Pickles.

Third Meal

Rice.
Meat or vegetable or lentil or fish curry.

262 In the making of curries the rich people use considerable
263 quantities of oil or other fats, and their choice of spices too is more varied. In the average households the curries are not so rich. Finally in the poorer sections they are more or less boiled vegetables and lentils with the addition of salt and chilly powder. It may be added that sweets do not form a regular part of the diet of the people in the community. They are prepared on ceremonial occasions, and may be prepared now and then in the comparatively richer homes. As fish and meat are very expensive, the average and poor families have to depend for most of the time on watery lentil curries or cheap vegetables.

125 The ethnographic record of the diet appeared to be so appalling
146 that we organized a comprehensive nutritional survey of the community in conjunction with our research project. This work was planned and carried out under the supervision of a nutritional expert from the Medical Faculty of the Osmania University. A

THE CHANGING SCENE

husband is alive must wear, were formerly made by one of the local castes from indigenous materials. Now factory-made glass bangles have captured the market almost completely. Children's dresses are now generally of Western style. Frocks, rompers, shirts and shorts are bought for them from the local market or from the shops in the city. Among other items of everyday wear Western-style shoes with laces are now being used alongside country shoes and sandals.

To the list of articles of daily requirement there have been several significant additions. Aluminium and 'German silver' utensils became very popular with the poorer sections of the population on account of their low prices. Glasses, as well as china cups and saucers, could be seen in several homes. Besides the public buildings five private homes now possess wall or alarm clocks. Kerosene lanterns can be seen in several homes, and there are five kerosene pressure lamps in the village. Some old people use reading glasses, and more then half a dozen young men from the village have bought sun glasses. Several people in the village use safety razors and torches. Cheap fountain-pens are also very fashionable.

In the food habits of the people there has not been much change. Sweets and other dainty eatables are bought from the shops in the city or from the bazaar. Five small stores in the village sell, among other things, lozenges, fruit-drops and biscuits made in Hyderabad. Tea and coffee are also very popular. Even those who do not drink these beverages regularly at home, occasionally have them in the village shop ostentatiously known as the 'hotel'. Aerated waters enjoy an amazing popularity as they are believed to provide relief from many stomach disorders. The cigarette factories at Hyderabad have been producing and popularizing cheap brands of cigarettes, which have been progressively replacing the country cigarettes in which tobacco is rolled in dried leaves. Along with fermented palm-juice, some people now drink other liquors supplied by distilleries in Hyderabad.

Side by side with the traditional recreations of gossip, loafing and playing indigenous games, several new varieties of entertainments are now available to the village people. The village has three gramophones. In the tea shop there is a crystal radio. Some young men in the village play volley-ball. Many people patronize the circus and cinema in the city.